DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 646 PS 016 995

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TITLE Somebody Cares: Eight Model Child-Care Programs for School-Age Children in Texas.
INSTITUTION Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas, Austin.
SPONS AGENCY Texas State Dept. of Community Affairs, Austin.; United Way of Texas, Austin.
PUB DATE Sep 87
NOTE 57p.; Photographs will not reproduce well.
AVAILABLE FROM Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas, 4029 Capital of Texas Highway South, Suite 102, Austin, TX 78704-7920 (free of charge).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care Centers; *Family Day Care; Financial Support; Guidelines; *Learning Centers (Classroom); *Models; Program Descriptions; Program Implementation; *Recreational Programs; *School Age Day Care
IDENTIFIERS *Texas

ABSTRACT

Described are eight child care programs for school-aged children in Texas which are thought to be models worth emulating. Five programs are licensed day care centers, one is a registered family day care home, and the remaining two are unlicensed recreation programs. All programs used interest centers to organize materials and activities. While no attempt was made to compare the eight programs, common interest areas included construction, books, arts and crafts, music, quiet games and manipulatives, and dramatic play areas. The handbook uses the same format to describe each program. Information is provided in nine sections, the headings of which are derived from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs' criteria for accrediting early childhood programs: (1) staff/child interactions; (2) curriculum; (3) staff/parent interactions; (4) staff qualifications and development; (5) administration; (6) physical environment; (7) health and safety; (8) nutrition and food service; and (9) evaluation. Described programs meet many of the criteria, but may not meet them all. Concluding remarks offer tips for program implementation, and provide information about the Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas and United Way of Texas' Child Care Working Group. Checklists and other materials are provided by several of the programs. (RH)

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Somebody Cares:

Eight Model Child-Care Programs for School-Age Children in Texas

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Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas

United Way

Prepared by the Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas under contract with the United Way of Texas and funded by federal Dependent Care Block Grant funds administered by the Texas Department of Community Affairs.

September 1987

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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Thanks to Children's World, Extend-A-Care, Joyce Reynolds, and Mark Twain Adventure Playground for allowing us to photograph their programs.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas would like to express its thanks to the directors and staff of each of the programs described in the handbook for all their time and help in providing information for the description of their programs. We also would like to express our appreciation of the six people who reviewed the handbook before publication. They include:

Nancy Baker
Director of Operations
Extend-A-Care
Austin, Texas

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Retired Child Development Specialist
Texas Department of Human Services
Fort Worth, Texas

Linda Ard
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Sallie M. Luedke
Metro Child Care Coordinator
YMCA of San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas

Leslie Linton
Director
South/South Central Region
Camp Fire Inc.
Dallas, Texas

Thanks also go to Dr. Sue Bredekamp, Director of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, NAEYC, for granting us permission to adapt the Criteria for Center Accreditation. Final thanks go to Helen Farabee, Chairperson, and the members of the United Way of Texas Child Care Working Group, as well as the Texas Department of Community Affairs, for their support of our work on this publication.

The Problem and Some Solutions

Across Texas, children are at home alone before and after school, on school holidays, and during school vacations. Their parents work and have not been able to find affordable, appropriate care for them. School-age children—as well as younger, preschool children—who are left alone without supervision are often called *latchkey*, a term coined many years ago because of the house or latchkey worn on a string around a child's neck. Long and Long (1983) give the most comprehensive definition of a latchkey child:

> ***Latchkey** is a term that defines children who are regularly left during some part of the day to supervise themselves, whether during the time they use group recreational programs, play in the street, stay home alone, join a gang, or for whom care arrangements are so loosely made that they are virtually ineffective.... Latchkey here refers to children who are regularly left unattended; this includes both children left alone and those in the care of an underage sibling.*

In 1986, a report, *Latchkey Children in Texas*, was prepared for the 70th Texas Legislature through work by the Task Force on Latchkey Children of the San Antonio Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families; the Child Care Working Group of the United Way of Texas; the School of Social Work, the University of

Texas at Austin; and the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating Council. This landmark report discussed the scope of the latchkey problem, made suggestions for action, and briefly reviewed sample model programs. It sounded the call for action. *Somebody Cares* is a response. We hope this handbook will be helpful to local groups that want to develop child-care programs to address the needs of school-age children in their communities.

Somebody Cares describes eight model child-care programs for school-age children. By model programs, we mean programs of sufficiently high quality for other communities to emulate. We selected these programs on the basis of their geographic location and diversity of approach. Five programs (Extend-A-Care, My Friend's Place, Prime Time, Children's World, and K.E.Y.S.) are child-care centers licensed by the Texas Department of Human Services. One program is a family day home registered by the department, and the other two are unlicensed recreation programs.

Two of the programs receive some Title XX funds from the Texas Department of Human Services. Extend-A-Care is a Title XX contract agency and receives 9 percent of its funding from the Texas Department of Human Services to serve low-income and protective service children. My Friend's Place has a provider agreement with the department to serve a few of these children on an as-needed basis.

This handbook uses the same format for each program to help readers find information quickly and easily. The headings come from the "Essential Elements of High Quality School-Age Programs" (see Chapter 2), which have been adapted from the criteria used by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs for accrediting early childhood programs. These national criteria represent the highest quality care. Programs described in the handbook meet many of the criteria, but they may not meet them all. For example, the academy recommends a minimum staff/child ratio of 1 staff to 12 children for 6- to 8-year-olds. Only four of the programs described in the handbook meet that criterion, but all of the programs greatly exceed the minimum ratio of 1 staff to 26 children required by the Texas Department of Human Services for the same age group in licensed child-care centers.

We have obtained the information for each description through interviews and on-site observations. Because each program is described in the staff's own terminology, different words are sometimes used to describe the same thing. For example, a staff member may be called a "caregiver," "teacher," or "counselor."

All of the programs have an organized way of providing children a choice of activities. Most of the programs call this system interest or learning centers. Interest centers are used as a means of organizing materials and activities so children can direct much of their own learning and play. The children independently choose from a variety of activities set up in defined areas of the room. They select their own materials and are responsible for clean-up. The children change activities at their own pace.

Common interest areas for school-agers include construction— blocks and/or woodworking; books; arts and crafts; music; quiet games—board games, puzzles, and manipulatives, such as Legos; active games; and dramatic play—dress-up and make believe.

We have made no attempt to compare the eight programs. Each represents a different approach to the care of school-age children. We open each description with a story based on actual occurrences at each facility. Some names and details have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the children and parents.

The final chapter, "Keys to Success," offers tips for avoiding pitfalls in developing child-care programs for school-age children.

Essential Elements of Quality Care

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, the accreditation arm of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, defines a high quality child-care program as one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and adults (parents, staff, and administrators) who are involved in the program. A good program provides experiences that contribute to the growth and development of healthy, intelligent, and productive members of society.

With that idea in mind, the academy has developed criteria for awarding accreditation to high quality child-care centers. The criteria were developed for all early childhood programs, but we have adapted them, with permission of the academy, specifically to school-age programs. The criteria, or "essential elements," appear below.

I. Staff/Child Interactions: A committed staff of caring and understanding adults

Staff assume the following roles:

* **confidant**—a trusting adult with whom children can talk;

* **mediator**—an adult who assists children in solving their own problems;

* **role model**—an adult who sets positive examples for children and;

* **cheerleader**—an adult who takes pleasure in each child's accomplishments.

Sufficient staff are available to provide frequent personal contact, meaningful activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed.

The number of children in a group is limited to facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activity among children. Group size varies depending on the type of activity and whether the group is indoors or outdoors.

II. Curriculum: A curriculum that encourages children to be actively involved with a variety of developmentally appropriate activities

Activities are relaxed, fun, and engrossing—not just entertaining. Activities include hands-on experiences with the real world and real objects.

Children have choices among activities that promote:

***motor development**—large muscle, small muscle, balance, and coordination;

***intellectual development**—language, reading, writing, and problem solving;

***creativity**—free expression such as art, music, and drama and problem solving such as cooking, nature activities, and table games;

***responsibility**—self-care needs such as preparing and serving foods, handling conflicts, and learning how to negotiate; and group responsibilities such as planning activities, care of equipment, job assignments, and establishing ground rules;

***positive self-image**—opportunities for everyone to succeed at several things, good health and nutrition; and

***special interests and activities**—field trips, long-term projects, special visitors, plays, sewing, woodworking, and crafts.

Some quiet, small-group, and solitary alternatives such as jacks, cards, jump rope, and books are planned for children who choose not to participate in large-group activities.

The schedule is balanced between active and quiet times including small-group, individual, indoor, outdoor, organized, and self-selected activities. Transition time is well-planned.

Staff conduct smooth and unregimented transitions between activities.

Provisions are made for children to complete homework as needed.

Multicultural, nonsexist, nonstereotyping pictures, dolls, books, and materials are available.

III. Staff/Parent Interactions: An effective, supportive relationship with parents

Parents are welcomed visitors in the center at all times and are encouraged to be involved in the program in various ways (newsletter, parent meetings, informal contacts with staff, for example).

Staff and parents communicate regarding home and center child-rearing practices to minimize potential conflicts and confusion for children. (This communication sometimes includes the child's public school teacher.)

IV. Staff Qualifications and Development: A staff of qualified adults who are provided on-going training

Staff understand child development. They recognize and provide for children's needs. The NAEYC recommends that caregivers in charge of a group have at least an associate degree in early childhood education/child development or a CDA (Child Development Associate) credential.

Staff are provided orientation and regular training in child development, health and safety, guidance techniques, curriculum implementation, program goals, communication with families, and other job-related responsibilities.

V. Administration: An efficient administration that supports the child-care program with attention to the needs of children, parents, and staff

Staff and administrators communicate frequently through such methods as joint planning and regular staff meetings.

Long-range budgeting and sound financial planning are used to ensure fiscal stability.

Attention is given to positive community relations, especially with the public schools.

Thorough operating procedures are defined and followed.

In cases where the center is governed by a board of directors, roles and responsibilities of board members and staff are defined in writing to facilitate communication and decision making.

VI. Physical Environment: An indoor and outdoor physical environment that provides opportunities for exploration, involvement, learning and positive interactions

Activity areas are defined clearly by spacial arrangement.

Space is arranged so that children can work individually, together in small groups, or in a large group.

Interest areas are visually appealing so the children will want to go there. They are located in such a way as to minimize interference between different program activities.

The interest areas are rotated regularly so children do not tire of a particular activity. Materials for each area are kept separately.

The number of areas or centers is not overwhelming for a child to choose from; areas or centers do not contain too many items. Five to seven areas are a good average. NAEYC recommends the following materials and equipment for school-agers:

* active play equipment and materials such as bats and balls for organized games;
* construction materials for woodworking, blocks;
* materials for hobby and art projects, science projects;
* materials for dramatics, cooking;
* books, records, musical instruments; and
* board and card games.

Storage is planned so children can obtain and return things independently. Clean-up materials are handy so children can care for their environment.

Children have individual places (tote trays, paper bags, ice-cream containers) to store their belongings.

Private areas are available indoors and outdoors for children to have solitude and still be visually supervised.

A relaxed home-like atmosphere is created by adding soft touches (rugs, large floor pillows, a bathtub with pillows, over-stuffed chairs or sofa, rocking chair, draped fabric, tablecloths, centerpieces, and art objects such as pictures, sculpture, and wall hangings).

VII. Health and Safety: A safe and healthy environment

Arrivals and departures are made safe for children and also allow for parent-staff interactions.

Children are under adult supervision at all times.

Uniform procedures are followed to help prevent illness and accidents, to deal with emergencies and illnesses, and to educate children about safe and healthy practices.

VIII. Nutrition and Food Service: A plan that provides nutritious food and positive experiences with nutrition

Children are provided nutritious snacks and meals (during full day care).

Meals and snacks are pleasant times when conversation is encouraged and independence fostered.

IX. Evaluation: A systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the program

The director evaluates all staff at least annually and privately discusses the evaluation with each staff member.

At least annually, parents, staff, and children are involved in evaluating the program's effectiveness.

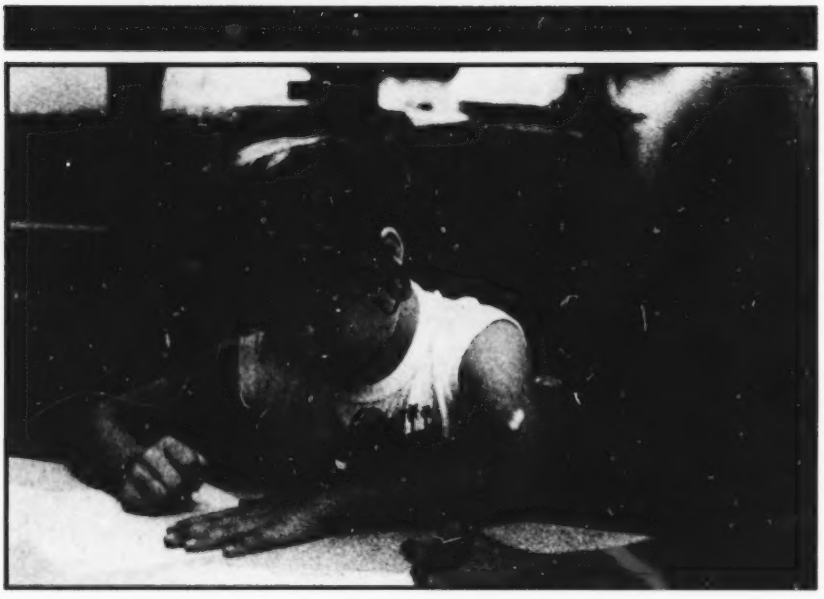
References:

Accreditation Criteria and Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs; Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1984.

Baker, N. *School Age Child Care*, Austin, Texas: Extend-A-Care, 1981.

Beaver, N. and S.C. Gainer, "How to Plan for School-age Children," *Texas Child Care Quarterly*, Summer 1986.

Successful Approaches to School-Age Care



The Camp Fire Activity Center
Waco, Texas

Children's World
Arlington, Texas

Extend-A-Care
Austin, Texas

K.E.Y.S. After School Program
Texas City, Texas

My Friend's Place
Plano, Texas

Jovce Reynolds Family Day Home
Corpus Christi, Texas

Prime Time, YMCA
San Antonio, Texas

Mark Twain Elementary School Adventure Playground
Houston, Texas

Camp Fire Activity Center

It's a hot summer day, and June and Shondra Smith have just been dropped off by their father at the Camp Fire Activity Center. The children at the center are singing, "I love the mountains, I love the rolling hills." June and Shondra listen for a while and gradually join in on the "Boom-de-a-dah" chorus. When the singing is over, the children wash their hands and get their lunches out. The Smith girls begin to withdraw from the group. Myrtle Thompson, the director, realizes that the girls have not brought a lunch. "Go find a seat at the table," she says, pushing them forward. She looks in the cabinet and finds peanut butter and crackers. "Eat 'em up," she says.

The Huaco Council of Camp Fire started its activity center when it realized that low-income children had no place to go. "We were looking for a way to reach the children in this highly populated, economically disadvantaged area," says Pat McKee, executive director. "We knew our traditional club groups was not the way to address these children's needs." The center started operation June 1, 1977, when the council took over a large gym-like building that had been operated as a youth center. The center offers a preschool

Type of Program:
Recreation drop-in care
* After school
* Holidays
* Summer

Average Enrollment:
Children are not formally enrolled
Average daily attendance:
80 - school year
65 - summer

Hours:
3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - school year
7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - summer and holidays

Ages Served:
6 to 18 years (younger children are not turned away)

Daily Transportation:
None

Number of Schools Served per Site:
5

Number of Sites:
1

Staff/Child Ratio:
Usually 1 to 9 during the school year. Approximately 1 to 8 at peak afternoon attendance times during the summer.

Maximum Group Size:
No group size is set, but children are informally grouped in two age groups.

For more information, contact:
Myrtle Thompson, Director
Camp Fire Activity Center
1301 N. 13th Street
Waco, Texas 76707-3133
(817) 752-5515 or 752-9460

program, an after-school drop-in program, and a summer day camp funded largely by the United Way. The center charges a $3.00 fee, but most children are on scholarships.

Staff/Child Interactions:

The Camp Fire objectives for the center focus on building self-esteem in children by offering quality programs in a caring atmosphere. Another objective is to help the community feel ownership of the program. "Some kids feel that nobody cares," Thompson says. "We're here to listen, to play, to care." The staff follows Camp Fire guidance procedures and posts rules and regulations, which the children helped develop, in the center.

Curriculum:

During the school year, children choose their activities from such areas as cooking, sewing, arts and crafts, dramatics, drawing, games, and self-reliance training (Camp Fire *I Can Do It* curriculum). Children stay in classes of their choice for 30 to 45 minutes and then switch activities. Some children enroll in 45-minute tutoring sessions given by the Waco Independent School District in the Band Hall, a nearby building also owned by Camp Fire. Staff accompany children to tutoring sessions. The summer program has a set schedule of activities, which alternates large and small groups.

Staff/Parent Interactions:

Some parents regularly volunteer at the center. Parents participate in special events such as parties and picnics. Staff follow up with parents on children's needs (shoes, clothing, for example). Staff concentrate on fostering community relationships, which has resulted in less vandalism and a neighborhood network that looks after the center. "People here don't want a handout, just a helping hand," Thompson says. "They know we are here for their kids."

Staff Qualifications and Development:

Staff are recruited from the neighborhood or are area university students. Washington says she looks for people who have a genuine concern for children: "That's the one thing you can't teach through staff training."

The center also uses volunteers, as many as six or seven daily. McKee explains her successful recruit-

Sample summer schedule:

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Free choice—table and action games
8:30 - 9:00	Movement and music (often aerobics)
9:00 - 9:30	Review of school skills in a game setting
9:30 - 10:00	Table games
10:00 - 11:00	Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: Arts and crafts related to weekly theme Tuesday and Thursday: Awareness - hands-on activities related to health and safety and values reinforcement
11:00 - 11:30	Free-choice active games—both indoors and outdoors (sports, relay races, jump rope, four square, pool, etc.)
11:30 - 12:30 p.m.	Lunch and rest
12:30 - 1:30	Crafts and group games
1:30 - 2:00	Friendship circle—share feelings and discuss conflicts
2:00 - 2:30	Circle games
2:30 - 3:30	Outdoor play
3:30 - 5:00	Free choice of table games, computer games, jacks, drawing, for example.

ment: "We allowed a fraternity to use the building after hours, and they, in turn, adopted us as a service project for two semesters."

Staff and volunteers receive an orientation to the Camp Fire philosophy and center procedures. Paid staff meet with staff from other Camp Fire programs for agency training every three months. The center director provides 26 hours of training for staff before the summer program and 20 hours before the fall program. Staff participate in weekly staff meetings. The director also provides on-going training for volunteers.

Administration:

A full-time director provides on-site administration. Personnel functions and bookkeeping are handled at the Camp Fire office. The Camp Fire Board oversees the program, along with other Camp Fire activities. The Camp Fire executive director supervises the center director and meets with her weekly to discuss the center operation.

One administrative concern is fee collection, which is built into the budget as 5 percent of the operating funds. "We were lax in collecting fees because we see this as a social service," McKee says, "and now the parents feel that they don't need to pay."

Physical Environment:

The building and grounds have been a big area of concern, but capital improvement grants will pay for remodeling the building and developing a playground in a Camp Fire-owned lot across the street. "This will be a community playground but built with our children in mind," says McKee.

The present building is basically one big room. "It can get pretty loud in here," Thompson says. "We would like to get some moveable partitions to divide areas for small group activities."

Health and Safety:

The center staff and the children follow procedures set by the Camp Fire Board. The center carries insurance on the children. Each child completes health and emergency forms, and has to sign in and out. Staff work with parents to obtain needed health services for the children.

Nutrition and Food Service:

The center has no regular food service. Children bring lunches on holidays and during the summer. Center staff keep cheese, peanut butter, and fruit on hand as back-up for children who forget. "We plan a lot of cooking activities as a way to provide food," says McKee.

Evaluation:

The Camp Fire Board has developed program standards. A committee of the board evaluates the program annually. The center director evaluates the staff.

Similar Programs:

Camp Fire provides a variety of programs for latchkey children in Texas including child care, self-reliance training and telephone reassurance programs. For information about what Camp Fire can do in your community, contact your local Camp Fire Office or Leslie Linton, Director, South-South Central Region, Camp Fire Inc. (214) 320-9194.

Children's World

Victoria Green and her 9-year-old son, Jason, are getting ready for a vacation trip to visit cousins in Memphis, Tennessee. They run by Children's World to pick up a T-shirt that Jason forgot to bring home. Cindy Hansen, Director, tells Jason how much they have missed him this week. Mrs. Green picks up a schedule of activities for the rest of the summer. When Jason sees that the school-age group is going swimming this afternoon, he asks, "Oh, Mom, can't I stay?"

Children's World is a national corporation of child-care centers. The 26 Texas centers are in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Funding is through parent fees.

Staff/Child Interactions:

The Children's World's philosophy of building each child's self-esteem is stressed throughout staff orientation and training. Cindy Hansen says, "Even in an interview, I tell applicants up front that the only reason we are here is for the kids."

Curriculum:

Children do activities in interest centers that include art, science-math, sensory-motor, language, and gross motor (large muscle). Extended activities are planned as part of the weekly activities. Provisions are made for children who need to do homework. The staff

Type of Program:
Licensed child-care center
* Before school
* After school
* Holidays
* Summer

Average Enrollment:
30 - school year
30 - summer

Hours:
6:30 a.m. until school starts; school dismissal until 6:30 p.m.

Ages served:
12 months through 12 years

Daily transportation:
To and from school

Number of Schools Served per Site:
3

Number of Sites:
This center is one of 26 Children's World Centers in North Texas

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 15

Maximum Group Size:
30

For more information, contact:
Cindy Hansen, Director
Children's World
Parkway Central
2016 Madison Drive
Arlington, Texas 76011
(817) 261-4061

writes weekly lesson plans that integrate activities around a theme and involve school-age children in planning the activities. One summer, a theme was "Around the World in 80 Days" (see sample). Resource people come to the center weekly to teach Spanish and hands-on science activities.

During the summer, school-agers have swimming twice a week and participate in the public library reading club. They also go on a variety of field trips. Hansen says, "Since our center is in Arlington right by three major amusement parks, our kids expect to be on the go, but we plan very carefully." (See Hansen's field trip suggestions in the "Keys to Success" chapter.)

Staff/Parent Interactions:

The center sends home a monthly newsletter that informs parents of plans, changes, and recent activities. The staff distributes activity calendars, posts notices and information on the parents' bulletin board, and posts teacher summaries of the day's activities on each classroom door. Parents volunteer to help with field trips. Meetings are held during the school year.

Staff Qualifications and Development:

Hansen says she looks for "a real commitment to children" when selecting new staff. Minimum qualifications include a high school education, 21 years of age for school-age staff who drive the bus, and completion of the Children's World training units. Preferred criteria include child development or early childhood training and experience. "It's nice to have people with degrees," she says, "but sometimes they are not the right people for a child-care setting." Children's World offers employees a benefits package, including vacation and sick leave, insurance, profit sharing, and employee child-care discounts.

The center holds two evening orientation sessions every three months for new employees. All new employees must complete a set of 15 self-paced training units, which include orientation materials. After completing the training, new employees receive a pay raise. Regional Children's World staff provide several optional training sessions to help the employee reach the state-required 15 training hours free of charge. In addition, staff receive on-going training through regular staff meetings and attend the local Association for the Education of Young Children annual conference.

Hansen says, "I post local area workshop notices and pay half the cost for anyone who attends." Children's World also publishes a staff training newsletter.

Administration:

This Children's World site has a full-time director, a part-time administrative assistant director, and a part-time staff trainer. The regional corporate office provides administrative support, including bookkeeping, payroll, training, quality control, supervision of the director, insurance, and marketing.

Physical Environment:

The school-age group has its own room. Because they do not have to share a room with another group, the staff can display children's work and have thematic bulletin boards. The room is divided into interest centers that are more elaborate than most school-age programs because they don't have to be put away each night. Careful scheduling gives school-agers exclusive use of the playground upon arrival from school.

Health and Safety:

All staff receive training in health and safety precautions. All staff and children follow established safety rules, which include rules for field trips, swimming, and transportation. Van drivers use a training guide and safety video developed by Children's World. (The video is available for purchase from the Children's World corporate office.)

Nutrition and Food Service:

On school days, children have an afternoon snack. On holidays and during the summer, lunch is served family style, which allows children to serve themselves. Children also take part in cooking activities on a regular basis. In the summer, the school-agers bake cakes and cookies, which they sell to raise money to pay for field trips to amusement parks.

Evaluation:

Evaluation is handled through a variety of methods. The director observes and evaluates the program and the staff. Parents fill out questionnaires. Regional administrative staff conduct regular quality control checks.

Similar Programs:

Private child-care corporations and businesses across the state offer school-age child-care services. National corporations include Daybridge Learning Centers, Regional Office, Houston (713) 578-4800; La Petite Academy, Division Office, Houston (713) 499-4951, Dallas (214) 270-1756; Kinder-Care Learning Centers, Regional Offices, San Antonio (512) 656-5986, Dallas (214) 243-4844, Houston (713) 862-8903.

TEACHER _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

UNIT TOPIC India and Africa

OBJECTIVES To become familiar with some of the customs in India and Africa

Day	Circle Time	Art	Math	Science	Sensory Motor	Language Development	Gross Motor	Extended Activities
MON.	Languages of India & Africa	Free Art using materials on the art shelf	Uno game	Science with Ms. Klein	Legos	Library for movies	Outdoor free time	Library for movies
TUE	Legend of the Sphinx	Make flags of India & African countries	Group Bingo	Jumping Raisins (cooking)	Shaving cream play	"The Goats" "The Tiger and the Jackel"	===S w i m m i n g ===	
WED	Festival of Lights	Colored flour art	Racko	Small collage	Colored flour art	Group Story	===S k a t i n g ===	
THUR	Festival Time	Paint with colored egg whites	Facts and Figures Game	Make candles (bananas cherries pineapple) for festival	Egg white painting	Book Nook open with books about Africa	===S w i m m i n g	
FRI	==========I n t e r n a t i o n a l W i l d l i f e P a r k ==========							

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Sample Weekly Plan
Around the World Theme

Extend-A-Care

It's 1969 and volunteers for the Austin Urban Council, a coalition of Presbyterian churches, are discussing ways to help the Johnson family. "Now that we have gotten both Mr. and Mrs. Johnson jobs, the children—all seven of them—are left at home alone after school sometimes until eight or nine o'clock," says Christine Wilson. "Yes, we've tried helping the children with homework," says Mary Gonzalez, "but it's hard when the older children have to watch the younger ones and fix dinner, too." In checking with the elementary school the children attend, the volunteers find that the teachers share their concern and also worry about other latchkey children in the area. "What if the children could stay at school until their parents get off work?," someone suggests. Thus begins the story of Extend-A-Care.

The agency started as an after-school program at Hyde Park Presbyterian Church in Austin. It served low-income children through funding from a variety of sources, primarily the Hogg Foundation, the Urban Council, and individuals. The third year, they included a pilot program at the Austin Independent School District and, a year later, the Texas Department of Human Services (Title IV-A and later Title XX).

Type of Program:
Licensed child-care centers
* After school
* Holidays
* Summer

Average Enrollment:
1,300 - school year (enrollment at individual sites varies); 550 - summer

Hours:
2:55 p.m. - 5:55 p.m.-school year
7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.-summer

Ages Served:
4 to 12 years

Daily Transportation:
No

Number of Schools Served per Site:
1 or 2

Number of Sites:
35 - school year (including two special programs for handicapped children who cannot be mainstreamed into other programs and three programs where handicapped children are mainstreamed with special staffing)

5 - summer (including two special programs for handicapped children—one handicapped program shares a site with another program)

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 17
1 to 3 for handicapped children

Maximum Group Size:
Scheduling is planned so that only half of the children are together at one time

For more information, contact:
La Verne Rodriguez
Executive Director
Extend-A-Care
4006 Speedway
Austin, Texas 78751
(512) 454-3651

Parents of children attending schools that were not in low-income areas began requesting services at their schools. Today, 60 percent of the children at Extend-A-Care centers are from middle-income families.

Extend-A-Care Inc. is now a nonprofit, school-age child-care agency with 35 centers in public schools throughout the greater Austin area. Three sites serve handicapped children. Funding sources include parent fees, TDHS, United Way, City of Austin, Travis County, Metro Ministries, and the Austin Independent School District (in-kind—use of facilities). Parent fees are on a sliding scale based on income and family size. Maintaining funding to support the high staff/child ratio for handicapped children requires on-going staff and board effort, according to La Verne Rodriguez, executive director.

Staff/Child Interactions:

Nancy Baker, director of operations, considers staff/child interactions the most critical aspect of care. Staff receive training in guidance techniques and skilled ways of talking with children. Evaluations of staff focus on their interactions with children. Each child has a primary caregiver to check in and out with. That caregiver also maintains contact with the child's parents. Activities during the school year include a unit on peer relationships from the Camp Fire curriculum.

Curriculum:

Through the 18 years that Extend-A-Care has served school-agers, the program has developed a thorough written curriculum based on developmental goals. Objectives are usually stated by the activities. Objectives include such things as: making choices, learning responsibility, problem-solving, encouraging cooperation, showing respect, appreciating other races and cultures, and developing leadership skills.

The heart of the curriculum is the interest centers. The five required centers are quiet-reading area, table games and puzzles, creative expression, dramatic play, and construction (woodworking, blocks, for example). Rotating centers include science, music, cooking, and planned arts and crafts.

During the school year, a homework area is set up. If a child's teacher has completed a form indicating a homework assignment, the child must spend a specific time working in the homework area.

Curriculum activities also include multicultural activities and values reinforcement. The staff plans a wide variety of activities for different ages and special activities for older children (9 to 12 years old). "This is our toughest group to plan for," Baker says.

A typical after-school schedule has the older groups outside or in the gym during bad weather for 45 minutes to an hour while the younger groups have snacks and indoor activities. Then the two groups switch.

Staff/Parent Interactions:

Each center has a Parent Advisory Committee, and the entire agency has a Parent Advisory Council. At least one council member serves on the Board of Directors. An Extend-A-Care parent representative sits on the PTA board of schools hosting an Extend-A-Care center.

The program offers parent workshops and social activities such as family picnics. Each parent receives a copy of the agency newsletter. Parent-teacher conferences are held as needed. Parents evaluate the center their children attend.

Staff Qualifications and Development:

The program recruits students from area colleges and universities. The part-time hours, better-than-average wages, and benefits attract more experienced staff (see attached staff recruitment flyer).

Baker believes that training is vital to maintaining high quality care. Every new staff member attends a three-hour orientation covering items required by licensing. The program provides 24 hours of in-service training at the first of the year and two-hour workshops each month, as well as 14 additional hours for summer staff. Area supervisors and site managers provide individual training on-site.

Administration:

As a large agency, Extend-A-Care has an extensive central office support staff that handles personnel matters, enrollment, billing and bookkeeping, purchasing, community relations, fund development, training, supervision, curriculum development, transportation, maintenance, and administration. The governing board determines policies and reviews programs and budget. Each center has a site manager. Area supervisors each work with four or five centers, depending on the size and type of program.

Physical Environment:

Thirty-two Extend-A-Care centers are housed in school cafeterias. One center is in a school gym, and one other center for handicapped children is housed in a neighborhood church. The gyms at the school sites are used in bad weather, and some are used daily.

In a typical site, the staff sets up interest centers on cafeteria tables. They also use tables as dividers to define interest areas. Materials are stored in a locked cabinet. Items used in one area are placed in baskets, tote trays, and boxes to facilitate set-up and clean-up.

Baker is honest about the limitations of using school sites: "Staff are not able to make the center as aesthetically attractive as they would like since everything is taken down each day. And they don't have wall space to display the children's artwork and projects." Staff also find it difficult to get water for painting or water play as well as to provide the messy play children love. "You have to watch placement of interest areas," says Baker. "They can't be too close together. It's better to space them out around the cafeteria."

Health and Safety:

Staff receive training in first aid, health and safety issues, and symptoms of child abuse. Site managers, bus drivers, substitutes, and supervisors are trained in CPR. Comprehensive emergency procedures are posted at each site.

Children receive informal health checks when they arrive. Staff make referrals in cooperation with parents when a child has a health problem. All children receive dental screenings, and parents can obtain financial help in serious cases.

One curriculum developmental goal focuses on health and safety. Staff use the *Kid's Guide to First Aid* in activities with the children.

A safety issue in using a school site is that the bathroom can be located down a long hall or around a corner. Children use bathroom passes, and staff monitor to ensure that children are not roaming the halls. Extend-A-Care installs its own telephone in all centers as a safety precaution.

Nutrition and Food Service:

Extend-A-Care participates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Care Food Program, which helps cover costs. Each site has its own refrigerator. Staff plan snacks that require little preparation. Children bring their own lunches on teacher in-service days. During the summer, a nutritionist is on staff, and each site has access to the school kitchen. Children participate in regular cooking activities, and County Extension agents do an expanded nutrition program with the children one hour a week for six weeks during the school year.

Evaluation:

Centers are evaluated by parents, the children, and school personnel. Supervisors visit sites at least weekly and evaluate site managers annually. Supervisors and site managers evaluate the caregivers. The operational director and each supervisor have a planning meeting twice a year. Board and staff directors develop goals and objectives annually. The advisory council has an annual planning and evaluation meeting. Funding sources and the Texas Department of Human Services Child Development staff evaluate the agency's program.

Similar Programs:

Nonprofit agencies across the state provide school-age child care and other services for latchkey children. Some are Clayton Child Care Inc., Fort Worth (817) 921-9381; San Antonio Urban Council Inc., San Antonio (512) 224-1756; and Children Home Alone Telephone Reassurance Service (Chatters) Neighborhood Centers Inc., Houston (713) 236-8377. A list of Title XX contract providers serving low-income school-age children can be obtained by contacting the regional office of Contract Services for the Family Self-Support Division, Texas Department of Human Services.

Sample Children's Evaluation

THOUGHTS ABOUT E-A-C

1. I think Extend-A-Care _____

_____

2. My favorite things to do in Extend-A-Care are _____

_____

_____

3. My least favorite things to do in E-A-C _____

_____

_____

4. The funniest thing that happened to me in E-A-C was _____

_____

_____

5. The most embarrassing thing that happened to me in E-A-C this year was when _____

_____

6. The best day I had at E-A-C this year was _____

_____

7. The worst day I had at E-A-C this year was when _____

_____

The worst day I had at E-A-C this year was when I fell down in the cafeteria and spilled everything on my tray

Sample Staff Recruitment Flyer

27 Austin locations

Extend-A-Care...

after school & summer for children K-6 whose parents work

IF YOU CAN:

- relate well to children in groups and individually
- manage children in an informal setting
- work well on a team

IF YOU ARE:

- energetic
- cheerful
- emotionally stable
- 19 or older

IF YOU HAVE:

- previous child-care experience
- previous work experience reflecting dependability and maturity

WE HAVE:

- working hours 2:00-6:00 p.m. on public school days
- locations around the city
- public school holidays off
- 5 paid leave days per school year
- special child-care rates for parents employed at centers
- opportunities to develop professional skills
- hourly wages beginning at ~~$4.85~~ 5.20
- full-time summer work optional
- worker's compensation

EXTEND-A-CARE LOCATIONS

25

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGING JOB, ARE INTERESTED IN AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE AND HAVE THE RIGHT SKILLS, WE NEED TO GET TOGETHER!

Please complete the form on the back of this brochure and bring it or mail it to:

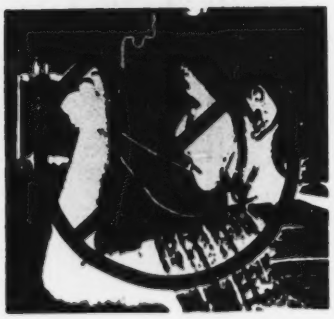
EXTEND-A-CARE
4006 Speedway
Austin, Texas 78751
454-3651

I AM INTERESTED IN EXTEND-A-CARE EMPLOYMENT

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____ PHONE_____

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE_____



LATCHKEY CHILD. Once a tag for a few kids left to fend for themselves after school, now it's a significant population segment, including 25–30% of children 6–13.

Counselors say that lack of after-school supervision often leads to fears, accidents, abuse, & misbehavior. . . . Poor use of idle time may lead to teenage problems. . . . Employers complain about loss of work time by parents repeatedly phoning children to check on them and settle sibling disputes. . . . Psychologists note that young childhood fears of intruders may cause years of anxiety.

Because we want Austin's young children to have a safe, happy and nurturing experience, Extend-A-Care offers an affordable option.

Call for more information: 454-3651.

Part-time Work With Children

EXTEND-A-CARE needs people who:

- Enjoy working with children
- Like school holidays off
- Need part-time work
- Have lots of love to share

K.E.Y.S.
After School Program

It's 1:45 p.m., and volunteers are arriving at St. George's Episcopal Church in Texas City. As soon as they enter the fellowship hall, they go right to work. Two women from St. Mary's Catholic Church and the First United Methodist Church arrange chairs around a table. Volunteers from St. George's open the storage closet and begin getting out supplies. In the kitchen, a woman from St. John's Methodist Church prepares juice and sandwiches. When Rev. Bob Bowles, the rector at St. George's, steps in to say hello, each volunteer stops what she is doing and waves back.

No, it's not an interfaith council meeting. It's a typical afternoon at the K.E.Y.S. After School Program.

K.E.Y.S. is a nonprofit service project of four churches and the Family Service Center of Galveston County. The program serves children who attend Roosevelt Wilson Elementary School. K.E.Y.S. is an acronym for Keep Every Youth Safe. The program grew out of a concern of local residents for the number of children who, because of economic reasons, were alone in the evenings after school.

Type of Program:
Licensed child-care center
* After school
(Follows the Texas City Independent School District school calender and observes same holidays as school. Care is not offered during the summer.)

Average Enrollment:
32

Hours:
2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Ages/Grades Served:
First through fourth grades

Daily Transportation:
None

Number of Schools Served per Site:
1

Number of Sites:
1

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 5

Maximum Group Size:
34

For more information, contact:
Nita Deslatte, Chief Administrator
Bessie Winston, Director
K.E.Y.S. After-School Program
St. George's Episcopal Church
510 13th Ave. N.
Texas City, Texas 77590
(409) 945-2583

The program is primarily for low-income families and single parents. The tuition is based on a sliding scale and ability to pay. Tuition accounts for only one-third of the center's income; the remainder comes from donations and fund raisers.

Staff/Child Interactions:

The K.E.Y.S. program has a paid part-time director and a staff of 25 volunteers from five local churches. Volunteers work once a week, so children have to deal with different adults each day. Staff follow established guidelines to ensure continuity of daily routines, smooth operation, and stability of the program. Removal from the group or time out is the major form of discipline.

Children assume leadership roles in heading up group activities, cleaning up after snack, and cleaning up the center on Fridays for Sunday church services.

Curriculum:

Two adults meet the children at their school in a designated area. After all are gathered, the children walk to the church fellowship hall and sit at a table for snacks. After snacks, the younger children have a short rest before doing homework. After they finish homework, they choose activities for the rest of the day from interest areas set up in various rooms in the church.

Interest areas consist of blocks, homemaking, books, table games, and arts and crafts. The director often sets up special activities such as seasonal crafts and storytelling. Children especially enjoy the block room. They use this area to create a city or farm covering the entire floor space. Children often play school in the homemaking area, which is located in a Sunday school room.

Staff/Parent Interactions:

Staff and parents enjoy a close relationship, which is built through personal day-to-day communication. Nita Deslatte, chief administrator, says, "We never pass up an opportunity to pass on to parents the special achievements of each child, and we also try to address any problems a child might be having." Parents have helped with fundraising and special projects. Some parents have made donations apart from the regular weekly tuition.

The children plan and present a program for their families at the end of the school year. The volunteers

prepare a hot dog supper for all who attend and have a pinata for the children.

Staff Qualifications and Development:

The K.E.Y.S. program relies on volunteers to staff the day-to-day operation. "We have been blessed with great Christian, committed people who come from all walks of life," Deslatte says. Volunteers include retired school teachers, a nurse, grandparents, scout leaders, retired business people, and a part-time church secretary. The program recognizes volunteer staff at the end-of-school party with an appreciation award. The staff has a covered dish lunch before their monthly staff meetings to foster better fellowship, and they celebrate staff birthdays.

The director is the only paid staff member. She meets the state licensing qualifications for child-care directors. These qualifications range from a bachelor's degree with 12 credit hours in child development/early childhood education and 1 year experience to 3 years experience plus 6 credit hours in child development/ early childhood education and 6 credit hours in business management.

At the beginning of each year, the staff receives a four-hour training program to orient them to policies and procedures. The orientation includes walking through the facilities, reviewing rules for each area, and tracing evacuation routes to be used in fire and emergency drills. The staff reviews minimum licensing standards as well as guidelines on health and safety for both children and volunteers.

The K.E.Y.S. program encourages staff, both volunteer and paid, to attend local workshops and pays their fees. Monthly staff meetings update staff on licensing issues and provide a time to discuss any problems encountered during the month. Staff receive a written review of each meeting, so that everyone stays current. Most staff have received more than the 15 hours of training required by state licensing standards.

Administrators attend workshops and conferences to enhance their knowledge.

Administration:

Administrative staff consists of a paid director, a volunteer chief administrator, a team of five daily volunteer captains, and the church rector. The captains supervise the volunteers on a certain day of the week. The director supervises the captains. She answers to the chief administrator and the board of directors.

Physical Environment:

The program is housed in St. George's Episcopal Church. The facility is new, having been rebuilt after a fire in 1983. The program uses half of the total church property, including a large fenced playground. The program uses the fellowship hall for games, crafts, and books; the preschool room for dramatic play; and another classroom for blocks.

Staff use a large storage closet for their supplies as well as several cabinets in the kitchen for snack items. The center uses its own table-top refrigerator. The center pays the church $50 a month for utilities. "If it weren't for the generosity of St. George's, our program could not exist," Deslatte says. "We try to keep the facility in good order and clean to keep up our end of the bargain."

Health and Safety:

The program encourages all staff to attend first aid and CPR classes, and someone qualified in both areas is at the church at all times. Outside resource persons such as nurses, dentists, firefighters, and police officers present health and safety programs for the children. "We have many senior citizens and grandparents on our staff," Deslatte says, "and not even the smallest health problem escapes their trained eyes." The staff conducts monthly fire drills, using evacuation routes shown on the plan posted in each room. When a child gets sick, the staff isolates the child in a separate room in the church.

Nutrition and Food Service:

Snacks include fresh fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, and cheese. "We introduced the children to fresh vegetable sticks," says Winston. "They eat them best with a spoonful of peanut butter for dipping." Children get cake and ice cream for birthdays and special occasions, or "if we get a well-meant donation." The director plans and posts the menu weekly. Volunteers help with the snack preparation. Occasionally, the staff plans cooking activities for the children to do. Because the kitchen is off limits to the children, the staff bring in cooking utensils for these special activities.

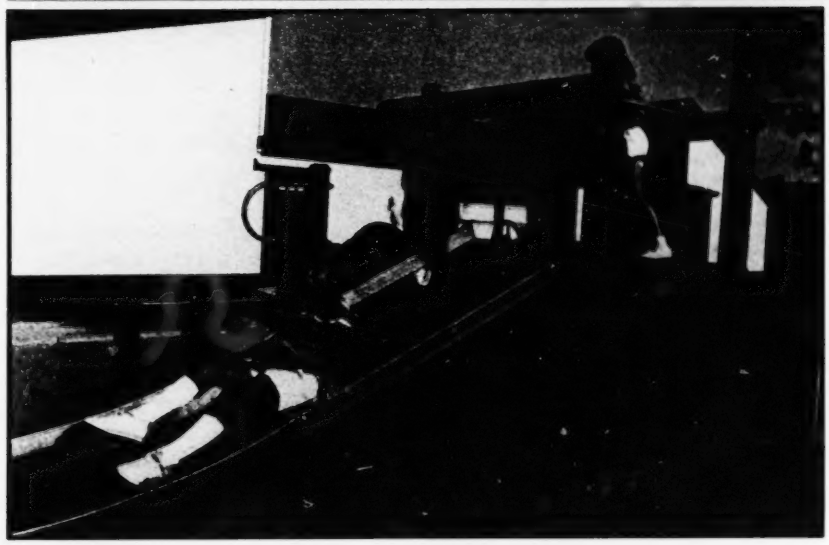
Evaluation:

The program has no formal evaluation system. Even so, parents and school teachers have given positive feedback. "Teachers have remarked on improvements in academic skills because of the help the children get with their homework," says Deslatte. At the end of one school year, children were asked to write what they like about the K.E.Y.S. program. The two statements repeated most often were: "It's fun," and "I don't have to be home by myself."

Similar Programs:

While many child-care programs use volunteers, it is unusual to find a child-care program fully staffed by volunteers. Other groups do use volunteers extensively to provide services to latchkey children. Some of the programs include telephone reassurance programs such as Home Alone/Grandbuddy Program, American Red Cross, San Antonio (512) 826-8611; Kid Talk, Lone Star Council of Camp Fire Inc., Dallas (214) 638-2240; Phone-a-Friend, Youth Services of Brazoria County, Angleton (409) 299-1311; Child Check, Huaco Council of Camp Fire Inc. (817)752-5515; and an anti-victimization program called We Help Ourselves (WHO), Mental Health Association of Dallas County, Dallas (214) 871-2420.

My Friend's Place



Susan Clark and Cindy Jefferies, best friends, get on the My Friend's Place van that waits for them after school. The girls are giggling so much that they forget to fasten their seatbelts and must be reminded by Ms. Cheryl Jones, the director. They giggle more. Once buckled up, they talk about their day while the van goes to pick up children at two more schools. Upon arrival at the church, the girls work on a collage at the art table and then get their own snack of pretzels and juice. Afterward, they agree to play Monopoly with Eric and Maria. As Susan moves her game piece closer to Cindy's properties with a hotel, Cindy says, "Okay, Susan, make my day."

My Friend's Place was started as a mission of the First United Methodist Church in Plano, Texas. The program is operated as part of the weekday ministries of the church, which also offers mother's day out and a large preschool program. The center provides scholarships to low-income families. It also has a provider agreement with the Texas Department of Human Services to provide care for a few protective service children and low-income children whose mothers are entering the work force. Classes are divided by grade levels: kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third through fifth grades.

Type of Program:
Licensed child-care center
* Before school
* After school
* Holidays
* Summer

Average Enrollment:
60 - school year
35 - summer

Hours:
7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.-before school
2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.-after school
7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.-summer/holidays

Ages served:
4-year-olds through fifth grade

Daily transportation:
To and from school

Number of Schools Served per Site:
6

Number of Sites:
1

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 12

Maximum Group Size:
12

For more information, contact:
Cheryl Jones, Director
My Friend's Place
First United Methodist Church
1111 18th Street
P. O. Box 67
Plano, Texas 75074
(214) 423-4910

Staff/Child Interactions:

The intent of the program is to provide a relaxed, caring environment for children. "We keep our focus on the kids," says Cheryl Jones, director. "It's got to be fun for them." All staff members follow the same rules for guidance and review them in staff meetings. The program also has rules for behavior on the vans, in the gym, on the playground, and on field trips. Older children are encouraged to help younger ones when groups are combined for special activities.

Curriculum:

Children do activities in learning centers, which consist of blocks, family living, listening, library, homework (during the school year), arts and crafts, and manipulatives (including games). They also do regular cooking activities in the church kitchen, individual biscuit pizzas being the favorite.

During the school year, activities are set up so children can choose one as they arrive. Typical choices include games, story records (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Black Beauty*), watercolors, collage or playdough, blocks, and dramatic play. A table is set aside for homework. Children eat a snack soon after arrival. The caregivers and children decide when the group will go outside or to the gym.

During the summer, the program continues to focus on self-selected activities in learning centers. The staff add new manipulatives and games. "We're very lucky because we are a church," says Jones. "We get lots of donations from spring cleaning." Summer also allows time for long-term projects and more complicated crafts.

After lunch, children rest on beach towels while their teacher reads one or two chapters from a favorite book. Bobbie Blankman, caregiver for the third through fifth grades, says, "The kids love the *Henry Higgins* books by Beverly Cleary." Kindergarteners nap every day after lunch.

On school holidays and three times a week during the summer, children go on field trips.

Staff/Parent Interactions:

Most interactions are informal discussions at the end of the day. Parents volunteer for field trips and special events such as a teacher appreciation day. A parent representative serves on the weekday board. Parents

have helped with fundraising for two new vans. "One parent donated oil and oil filters for the vans," Jones said. Parent-teacher conferences are held when needed.

Staff Qualifications and Development:

Several of the staff also work or have worked in other weekday programs offered by the church. Many have 7 to 10 years' tenure. Other staff were originally recruited from the church membership. The director had nine years experience teaching in the public schools before joining the staff in 1984.

Training averages more than 27 hours per staff person a year. Each summer, the staff receive nine hours of in-service training covering policies, personnel handbook, room arrangement, activities, guidance, teamwork, and scheduling. Staff participate in quarterly staff meetings and regional training offered by the Methodist Pre-school Association.

Administration:

The administration consists of a full-time director, bookkeeping provided by the church staff, and administrative support from the Weekday Programs Director and the Minister for Youth Services. The Church Weekday Program Board oversees the operation of the program. The director drives one van on three different bus runs daily during the school year. One teacher drives a second van for the 2:45 p.m. bus run. Children from the school across the street are met by a teacher who walks with them to the church. One of the teaching staff comes in early to cook lunch.

Physical Environment:

The program shares rooms with the preschool program at the church. Each classroom has lockable storage shelves for school-age materials, with a similar cabinet for each preschool class. Jones says, "Everything in the room should be accessible to the children." The staff change the materials daily. The program also shares three storage rooms containing an abundance of supplies with the preschool and mother's day out programs. School-age specific materials are stored in separate bookcases.

The church has a gymnasium and playground that the school-agers use daily. The center also makes use of a school-age playscape at an elementary school across the street.

Health and Safety:

The center has developed procedures for emergencies, van use, playground use, and field trips, as well as rules for the classroom. Staff review these procedures in staff meetings. On field trips, staff take transportation and emergency medical permission forms with the children. Staff have received training in first aid and CPR.

Nutrition and Food Service:

The center provides lunch for kindergarteners during the school year and all children during the summer. Food is served cafeteria style with milk and seconds served by caregivers who eat with the children. Meals are nutritious and planned to include foods children like. "Believe it or not, chicken, broccoli, and rice casserole are really a hit with these kids," Jones says. Children help serve snacks.

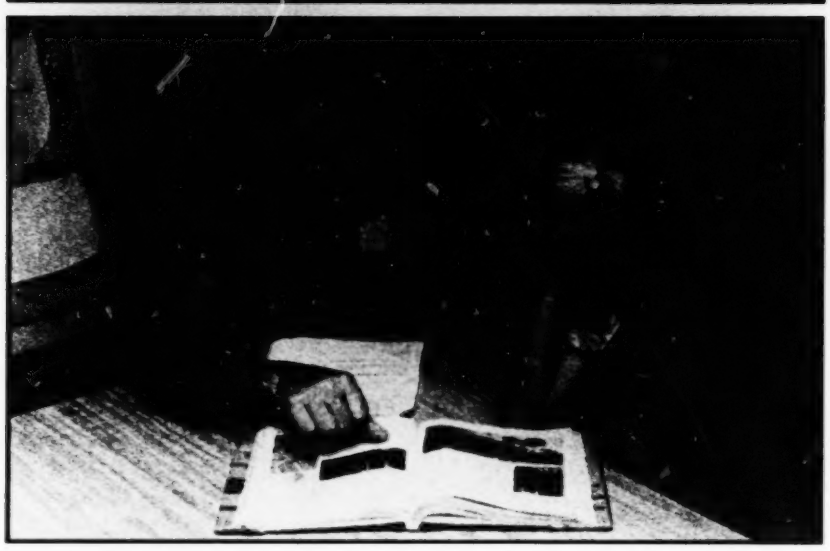
Evaluation:

The Texas Department of Human Services Child Development Staff formally assesses the center's program every year. Informal evaluations include verbal contact with parents and analyzing reasons for children leaving care. Staff critique their performance and the program in staff meetings as well as during individual conferences with the director. Cheryl Jones says her best evaluation system is to look at the kids. If they are happy and having fun, the program is successful.

Similar Programs:

Churches across the state offer child-care services. One other church that has a large after-school child-care program is Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston (713) 781-3811.

Joyce Reynolds Family Day Home



Steven, Jason, and Ignacio (age 8) have been best friends since they met at Joyce Reynolds' day home when they were 3 years old. Nicknamed the "three musketeers" by their school teachers, the boys meet in the hall after school and walk a block to Reynolds' house. When they arrive, they say hello to Reynolds, make a snack in the kitchen, and go to the garage playroom to continue work on a project they have had set up all week. They have strung lines of string across the garage in every direction. Using Legos, the boys build GI Joe commando survival packs, which they attach to the string. Jason picks up the block he is using as a walkie-talkie, calls out, "Go, Joe!," and releases the Legos to slide down the string.

Joyce Reynolds operates a family day home one block from a cluster of five schools. The parents using her home are school teachers, so she follows the school calendar and does not offer day care during the summer. Besides the six school-age children, she also cares for their preschool siblings all day.

Type of Program:
Registered family day home
* After school only

Average Enrollment:
6 - school age
6 - preschool age

Hours:
2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.-after school

Ages served:
Kindergarten through fifth grade

Daily transportation:
Children walk from school

Number of Schools Served per Site:
2

Number of Sites:
1

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 12 (includes 6 preschool children in care all day)

Maximum Group Size:
12

For more information, contact:

Joyce Reynolds
2240 Lombardy
Corpus Christi, Texas 78418
(512) 937-5431

Staff/Child Interactions:

Reynolds and the children set rules and guidelines for behavior together. "I believe that children from 6 to 10 need to talk about their day at school, do their homework, or get some physical exercise," says Reynolds. "We are informal here—like a family." For example, when the preschool children wake up from their naps, they greet their school-age brothers and sisters with hugs and kisses.

The preschool children nap until about 3:00 p.m. This allows Reynolds some special time with the school-agers when they arrive. It also means that there is only one hour per day when Reynolds is dealing with all 12 children.

Reynolds uses logical consequences as the main method of discipline with the school-age children. "If they break something by using it inappropriately, then they don't get to play with it or the replacement the next day," says Reynolds. "When there is a problem, I also discuss things with the children and try to really listen to their view of the situation."

Curriculum:

Reynolds provides a relaxed home atmosphere that incorporates interest centers in the garage/playroom as well as outdoor activities in the yard.

When asked what he does in the afternoon, Steven Kilgore, age 8, says, "I go to Mrs. Reynolds to play, catch grasshoppers, and jump on the trampoline." Reynolds allows the school-age children the same independence they would enjoy at home. For example, the children walk from school to her home, prepare snacks, choose activities, and play in the yard by themselves. "The school children know the limits, such as only two at a time on the trampoline," says Reynolds. "They can retrieve a ball that has gone over the fence after checking with me." One school-age child goes to Girl Scouts one day and piano lessons another day, instead of coming to Reynolds' home.

Reynolds allows the school-agers to help plan activities. They are allowed access to the television and the video cassette player while the preschool children are not. "We have tapes of the Disney Sunday movies and after-school specials for rainy days," says Reynolds.

Reynolds works with the children on their school projects. "One day we all mixed up play dough

because Jason said his mom didn't know how to make the 'dirt' for a volcano. He took it home with him to finish the project," says Reynolds.

Staff/Parent Interactions:

"In a day home, there is a smooth flow of communication between caregiver and parents because you see them every day," says Reynolds. "I am the only one their child sees after school, so I get all the school notes, report cards, and so forth." When a new latchkey after-school program opened recently at the school, Reynolds thought the parents would move their school-age children to the new program, but they did not.

Staff Qualifications and Development:

Reynolds has 20 years experience in teaching children. She has taught kindergarten in a private school and started a nursery school in Italy for American military children. She has 35 college credit hours, 15 of which are in early childhood development. She is currently enrolled in a special early childhood program for day home providers who are working toward the CDA credential at Del Mar College. A CDA (which stands for Child Development Associate) is a person who has earned a national credential for demonstrating competence in working with preschool children. While the focus of the CDA is on preschool children, much of the training is relevant to school-age care as well.

Reynolds is a member of the Bay Area Association for the Education of Young Children and attends the annual training conference. At a recent conference, she gave a presentation as part of the program.

Administration:

Reynolds handles all recordkeeping, fee collection, and other administrative functions.

Physical Environment:

Reynolds' program is in her home. She has turned her garage into a playroom. The backyard is fenced and has a covered patio, which is used as a play area. A favorite feature of the yard is the 12-foot trampoline.

The playroom is divided into interest centers consisting of an art/manipulative center with a table and storage shelf, housekeeping/dramatic play center, blocks and floor toys center, book center, and table for special activities such as sand and water play. Some toys are reserved for use by the school-age children. These toys are stored on higher shelves.

The dining room offers a quiet place to do homework.

Health and Safety:

Reynolds maintains up-to-date health records on each child. She has used the Day Home Health and Safety checklist from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service training manual, *Child Care: A Family Day Home Care Provider Program*, to check her home.

Nutrition and Food Service:

Reynolds provides an afternoon snack for the school-age children. She is registered for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Care Nutrition Program through the Association for Children's Nutritional Growth in Humble, Texas. She plans the snack menus based on USDA requirements and organizes the food and materials on a tray. When the school-agers arrive, they check the menu and make their own snack.

Evaluation:

Reynolds' home is registered with the Texas Department of Human Services and is open to inspection by parents and the department's representatives at any time. Her home's operation has been observed and evaluated by her supervising instructor at Del Mar College.

Similar Programs:

Many family day homes across the state offer care to school-age children. The Texas Department of Human Services maintains a list of registered family day homes in each region. The lists are available by contacting the local day care licensing office.

San Antonio YMCA

Alice Naranjo, a college student and Prime Time counselor, likes to play table games with the children and spends a lot of time hugging kids and talking with them. Wherever she goes, acrowd of girls or boys follow her. One day, Alice comes in with a new hair style. The next day, five school-age girls come in with the same hair style. Alice smiles. The administrative staff is right; she is a role model for the children.

Prime Time is operated by the YMCA of San Antonio. Overall, the Y's six branches serve more than 2,000 children at 58 school sites. The information below describes only those programs offered through the Northeast Branch.

Staff/Child Interactions:

One of the program's three goals is to help children develop their fullest potential, focusing on self-awareness, confidence, and feelings of self-worth, as well as interpersonal relationships and values development. To help accomplish this goal, each child signs a Code of Conduct contract with his or her Prime Time counselor. All staff receive training in communication methods, staff as role models for children, the changing American family, and guidance techniques. Time out

Type of Program:
Licensed child-care center

- After school
- Holidays (at regional school sites)
- Summer (Through a program other than Prime Time, the Northeast YMCA provides summer day camp in the park where the branch is located.)

Average Enrollment:
725

Hours:
School dismissal until 6:00 p.m.-after school
7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.-summer

Ages Served:
5 to 12 years

Daily Transportation:
None

Number of Schools Served per Site:
1 to 3

Number of Sites:
16

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 12

Maximum Group Size:
No group size is set, but small-group activities in interest centers as well as planned use of the playground serves to divide children into manageable groups.

For more information, contact:

Sallie Luedke, Metro Child-Care Coordinator
Prime Time, YMCA
P. O. Box 47607
San Antonio, Texas 78265-8607
(512) 656-5777

is the major means of discipline. Counselors always discuss a child's behavior with the child before placing him or her in time out.

Curriculum:

The YMCA used the national YMCA curriculum the first year of operation but found that it did not meet the program's needs. Staff developed their own curriculum guide, which is now used at all sites in San Antonio. Susan Schulze, Branch Program Director, says, "Site directors have a lot of flexibility in their use of the curriculum."

At each site, children play in interest centers. These include arts and crafts, homework, reading and listening to tapes, table games, and gross motor (large muscle). Staff add other interest areas to meet curricular needs. Themes, including holidays and birthdays, provide the focus for planning activities. Special events include sports tournaments, community service projects, field trips on holidays, movies, and visits by special resource people such as artists, aerobics instructors, musicians, and pet store or zoo staff.

Typical after-school schedule:

2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Check-in and roll call
3:00 - 3:30	Free play, a relaxed time when children have a choice of outdoor play, indoor active games (basketball, etc.), table games, and homework.
3:30 - 4:00	Snack
4:00 - 5:30	Interest centers
5:30 - 5:45	Free play
5:45 - 6:00	Clean-up and check out

Staff/Parent Interactions:

The first goal of the Prime Time program is to support and strengthen the family unit. Schulze indicates that the YMCA is looking at ways to improve the attainment of this goal. Currently, most interactions are informal one-on-one contacts between the director and parents. News notes and program notices are sent home to parents. Each site has a parents' bulletin board. Open houses, parent dinners, and special family

events such as a parents-versus-children beach ball volleyball game serve as parent meetings. Parent representatives serve on the Prime Time Advisory Committee.

Staff Qualifications and Development:

Sallie Luedke, Metro child-care coordinator, says the key to hiring staff is "finding special staff who have the temperament to deal effectively with these children." Luedke looks for a mix of three personality types to staff each site—a "jock" or buddy, a nurturer, and an authority figure. She feels that this mixture of staff best meets the needs of the children.

Each site has a site director and one or more counselors who work with the children. Each site director meets the qualifications of a child-care center director set by the licensing division of the Texas Department of Human Services.

All staff are trained in first aid and CPR. Staff attend two four-hour orientation sessions before school starts. They attend an agency-wide Saturday workshop for four and one-half hours of training in the fall. During the year, they also attend professional training provided by the YMCA and the San Antonio Association for the Education of Young Children. Staff receive their regular wage while attending training. YMCA administrative staff provide specific staff training.

Administrative staff meet weekly with site directors. Schulze says, "As the year progresses and everyone understands the philosophy and routines, we meet less frequently."

Administration:

Each YMCA branch has a child-care director, executive staff, and support staff to handle billing and fee collection, bookkeeping, training, food service planning, licensing, and administrative functions. "You can't overburden that site director. She needs to keep focused on the program," says Luedke. The branch's child-care director visits sites at least weekly. While there, she completes a quality control checklist, which covers licensing requirements, health and safety, personnel management, equipment inventory, staff/child interactions, program, and food service.

Physical Environment:

Prime Time programs are housed in school gymnasiums or cafeterias. Because of this arrangement, storage for equipment and supplies is limited. Each site has a footlocker to store equipment as well as a file cabinet to store files. Luedke says, "Licensing standards talk about posting things like the license, emergency phone numbers, inspections, etc. We have gotten permission to put these items in a notebook since we are not allocated use of wall space."

Usually, only one or two tables are available from the school. These are reserved for homework and arts and crafts. Other interest centers are set up on the floor in different areas of the gym. Gym mats, quilts and pillows are used in the quiet areas. Usually, two areas of the school playground are used—an open area for running and organized sports and the climbing/swinging area for free play.

Health and Safety:

The YMCA has set policies and procedures for safety and first aid. Emergency numbers are on file at each branch as well as each site. Children have to check in and out with a Prime Time counselor. During the hours the program is open, at least two staff are always at each site and at least one branch administrator is at the branch to handle emergencies. Equipment is chosen carefully. Staff "police" the facility and playground daily before the children arrive.

"For risk management purposes, we periodically review accident reports to identify hazards," says Luedke. It may look safe, but if kids continue to get hurt on the same equipment, something is wrong." The quality control checklist helps staff monitor health, safety, and sanitation.

Nutrition and Food Service:

Prime Time staff have been resourceful in identifying healthful snacks that the children enjoy and also meet the local health department's requirement of being individually wrapped. "We probably spend more for snacks than most school-age programs, because of the health department requirement," Luedke says. "We are really pleased with the variety of nutritious snacks we have been able to provide, including peanut butter and crackers, popcorn, cheese and crackers, etc."

On holidays, the children bring their own lunches. Staff work with parents on what to pack in lunches.

Evaluation:

The quality control checklist is a primary evaluation tool. The program conducts annual surveys of parents, children, staff, and school personnel to determine their needs and satisfaction with the program. The administrative staff evaluates each program and uses the results in goal setting with site staff.

Similar Programs:

The YMCA and YWCA are the largest providers of school-age child care in the nation. For information, contact your local YMCA or YWCA.

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST

YMCA of San Antonio—Child Care Department

SITE:_____
DATE:_____
SIGNATURE:_____

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ADMINISTRATIVE NOTEBOOK/FILES

I. Postings
_____A. License (expiration date_____)
_____B. Certificate of Occupancy/Letter
_____C. First-aid Guide
_____D. TDHS Availability Notice
_____E. Copy of TDHS Standards (with 2 additions)
_____F. YMCA Charter
_____G. Copy of Board Minutes and Members of Board (current)
_____H. Most recent TDHS Inspection (if posting is required) (Date_____)
_____I. Director's Designation
_____J. Current 30 Day Menu -- Plus One Previous Month's Menu

II. Inspections
_____A. Most Recent TDHS Inspections (if not posted) (Date_____)
_____B. Current Annual Health Inspection/Letter (Date_____)
_____C. Current Annual Gas Inspection (Date_____) Fire Inspection (Date_____)
_____D. Monthly Fire Extinguisher Check Sheet
_____F. Emergency Drills
Fire (4 per year) Dates:_____ _____ _____ _____
Tornado (1 per year) Date:_____
Other (1 per year) Date:_____

III. Children's Files
_____Complete file on each child
_____Files in alphabetical order

IV. Health/Safety
_____A. Emergency Pick-up Verification Forms
_____B. Accident Report Forms
_____Major Accidents
_____Minor Accidents
_____C. Medication Administration Log

V. Policies and Procedures
_____A. Daily Operation Procedures
_____B. First-aid, Safety, and Health Procedures
_____C. Procedures for Enviromental Emergencies
_____D. Procedures during Regulatory Inspections
_____E. Hot and Cold Weather Alerts

VI. Attendence Sheets
_____A. Current Sign-in Sheet
_____B. Old Sign-in Sheet for past three months (chronological-complete)

VII. Employees' Files
_____A. Complete file on each employee
_____B. Substitute Staff Sign-in Sheet
_____C. Old Time Sheet--previous three months on each employee in chronological order

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FACILITY EVALUATION

I. Playground Inspection
_____Ants/Other Insects
_____Glass/Dangerous Objects
_____Uncovered Cement (at base of playground equipment)
_____Large Holes/Mud/Standing Water
_____Broken Fence
_____Climbing Equipment in Good Repair
_____Swings in Good Repair/Empty Chains Wrapped Up
_____Stray Animals

II. Restroom Inspection
_____Paper Towels
_____Toilet Paper
_____Soap (sanitary)
_____Floors Clean/Dry
_____Toilets Clean/Flushed
_____Sinks Clean
_____Hot Water
_____Odor
_____Covered Trash Cans

III. Children's Belongings
_____In Seperate Bags
_____Near/Orderly
_____Coats/Sweaters (neat/orderly)

IV. First-aid Kit
_____Multi-size Adhesive Bandages
_____Guaze Pads
_____Tweezers
_____Cotton Balls
_____Hydrogen Peroxide
_____Thermometer
_____Syrup of Ipecac (Date:_____)
_____Cot/Air Mattress (Sanitized_____)
_____Ice Chest/Refrigerator with seperate compartment for medication.

Suggested First-aid But Not Required
_____Scissors
_____Roll Bandages
_____Adhesive Tape
_____Ice/Cold Pack

IV. First-Aid (cont.)

_____Asprirn (individually wrapped packages) Children's strength
_____Written Approval from Each Child's Parent to give Aspirin
_____Neosporin Ointment
_____Betadine
_____Alcohol
_____Calamine Lotion
_____All First-Aid Supplies Out of the Children's Reach

V. Fire Extinguisher
_____Mounted on Wall
_____Current Inspection Tag (Date:_____)
_____Charged
_____Staff Familiar With Use
_____Checked Monthly By Staff

VI. Fire Exits
_____Fire Exit Signs
  _____Post Over at Least Two Exits
  _____Lighted (if electiric)
_____Fire Evacuation Plan Posted on Wall by One Exit
_____Central Relocation Plan Posted with Fire Evacuation Plan

VII. Supply Box/Cabinet
_____Neat/Orderly (Wheels_____Locked_____)
_____Paper (scrap, construction)
_____Crayons, clay, pencils, chalk
_____Scissors
_____Balls (list quantity below)
  _____Basketballs
  _____Soccerballs
  _____Footballs
  _____Playground
_____Jumpropes
_____Frisbees
_____Games (in good condition) (list quantity below)
  _____Table
  _____Cards
  _____Dominoes
  _____Checkers/Chess
  _____Other
_____Working Flashlight
_____Extra Cups (clean/sanitary)
_____Stapler
_____Tape Dispenser
_____Tape
_____Glue
_____Ball/Equipment Bag
_____Other Sports Equipment (Types:

_____Working Telephone
_____Emergency Phone Numbers Available

VIII. Cafeteria/Gym

_____Floors clean/repaired
_____Walls clean/in good repair
_____Fire Exits Unblocked
_____Electircal Outlets in good repair
_____Water Fountain
  _____Working
  _____No Leaks
  _____Clean
_____Trash Container (covered)

OBSERVATIONS

_____Staff Wearing Nametags
_____Staff Interaction
  _____With Children
  _____With Parents
  _____With Each Other
_____Staff Appearance
_____Knowledge of Children/Parents
_____Staff Aware of Children's Whereabouts
_____Procedures Being Followed
  Procedures observed with comments_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____Quality of Ongoing Activities
  Activities Observed with Comments_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____Program Conducted in Compliance with TDHS and Health Dept. Regulations

SNACK/FOOD SERVICE

_____Food Fresh (stored properly off floor--sanitary)(Food Baskets Clean)
_____Hands washed prior to snack
  _____Staff
  _____Children
_____Food Service Area Clean/Sanitary
_____Trash Disposed of -- Promptly and Properly
_____Plastic Gloves used (when necessary) stored properly
_____Napkins Used
_____Procedures Followed
_____Menu Followed with a Variety of Items Offered
_____Beverages Defrosted

MEDICATIONS

_____Medications in Original Container
_____Accompained by a Note from Parent
_____Stored Out of Children's Reach
_____Refrigeration Available
_____Medication Returned/Disposed of Promptly
_____Medication Administration Form Completed
_____Aspirin Administrated Only Proper Procedures

Developed by: Sallie M. Luedke __Metropolitan Director—Child Care

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Mark Twain Adventure Playground

Pee Wee was two years behind in school when he came to the adventure playground in September. An aggressive 11-year-old, he had learned to solve most problems by fighting. He set about building a playhouse from scrap lumber and other materials. After several weeks, he had built an 11-room, three-story mansion, which he labeled his "condominium." One weekend in February, two boys climbed over the fence and tore down part of the condo. On Monday, Robert Hager, program director, discovered the damage and prepared for the worst. When Pee Wee saw the wreckage, he clenched his fists and located the two boys. While everyone held their breath, he marched them over to the condo. "Now, you rebuild it just like it was!," he said. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Pee Wee had learned a healthy way of handling his anger.

The adventure playground at Mark Twain Elementary School opened in February 1986. It is the second playground founded by the Houston Adventure Play Association, a nonprofit agency formed as an outgrowth of the Latchkey Committee of the Metropolitan Organization. The playground is designed on the European model, which provides children with raw

Type of Program:
Unlicensed recreation program
* After School
* Summer

Average Enrollment:
50 - school year
38 - summer

Hours:
3:00 - 5:30 p.m. (school year)
1:00 - 5:30 p.m. (summer)

Ages/Grades Served:
Elementary grades

Daily Transportation:
None

Number of Schools Served per Site:
1

Number of Sites:
2

Staff/Child Ratio:
1 to 20 (based on enrollment)

Maximum Group Size:
20

For more information, contact:
Robert A. Hager
Program Director
Houston Adventure Play Association
1925 South Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77098
(713) 529-1975

materials such as scrap lumber, nails, bolts, rope, sand, paint, seeds, and tools to create their own self-directed projects. Frances Heyck, administrator, says, "You can always tell when you are getting near an adventure playground by the sound of the hammers."

Half the children at the Mark Twain site participate as one option in the extended day program offered by the Houston Independent School District. The rest are neighborhood children who attend on a drop-in basis. The school is in a neighborhood in transition and is surrounded by subsidized apartments. No fees are charged. Dr. Tom Matney, board member, says, "The program serves not only latchkey children, but also 'street children' who may have a parent at home but for a variety of reasons that parent is not capable of parenting or meeting the child's basic needs of food, cleanliness, and security."

Staff/Child Interactions:

The Adventure Play Association objective is to help build strong children who have sufficient sense of their own self-worth that they can function as members of a mini-community. The children have responsibility in planning events, activities, and new playground components. They also build, care for and maintain the playground, develop organizational structure and procedures, and solve interpersonal problems. The focus is on children as problem-solvers. With staff support, they learn to deal with conflict. Trained play leaders model cooperative styles and encourage children to take responsibility for their own interactions and disputes. Community rules are negotiated in weekly meetings with the children. The penalty for disobeying rules is to be barred from participating in the program.

Curriculum:

Adventure Play activities include opportunities for carpentry, arts and crafts, gardening, sand and water exploration, drama, and nature awareness. Wherever relevant, children have the option of getting involved in activities planned by play leaders such as bicycle repair shop, wood sculptures, gardening, or bringing their own ideas to life with the available materials, tools, and space. The program emphasizes self-initiation and is modeled after the notion of an "idea factory." "Kids build when and what they feel like and tear down when they feel like it," Heyck says. "It's their world and it's constantly evolving." Play leaders attempt to provide needed guidance and materials to facilitate the

children's ideas and interests. Children are the dominant force in the planning process.

Staff/Parent Interactions:

Parents are welcome to visit or to fully participate in the playground activities. "We feel that active involvement is the best way for parents to really understand the program," says Hager. Parent meetings, a parent bulletin board, and parent/play leader conferences are all used in reaching parents. One parent said of the program, "I like the program because my son gets to be a boy."

Staff Qualifications and Development:

There are two play leaders at each site operated by the Houston Adventure Play Association. Staff have a variety of backgrounds. They may include teachers with a master's degree and several years of experience, college students with minimal experience, as well as artists. The program recruits people who have an interest in relationships and who are creative. "An essential quality we look for is an authentic commitment to helping children be 'powerful' with a strong sense of self-worth," says Heyck.

Staff training consists of 20 hours of initial training and weekly two-hour training sessions. Orientation and in-service subject matter include child development (cognitive and socio-emotional development), cultural factors, Adventure Play philosophy, activity/environment development principles, conflict resolution techniques, staff/child interactions, and individual children's needs. Training is given by the program director and program coordinator as well as some outside sources.

Administration:

The program director supervises and trains the play leaders and oversees the implementation of the program at both sites. A part-time administrator handles bookkeeping, payroll, fundraising, correspondence, and public relations. The administrator answers to the board of directors.

Physical Environment:

The playground is at the Mark Twain Elementary School. It consists of a large fenced-in space with a raised shelter to provide shade, a sand table, a water container or table, and a large walk-in storage shed. The program has access to indoor classroom space in the event of bad weather. The playground is divided into separate areas for carpentry, art, and gardening. The rest of the playground changes as the children's interests change. Much of the area is occupied by huts or clubhouses the children have built. "It's life in miniature," says Heyck. "When one building infringes on a neighbor's property, they've got to negotiate."

Health and Safety:

Children have participated in developing the procedures for the safe use of tools and materials. They have also helped to formulate the consequences if the rules are broken. Staff consistently discuss safety concerns in staff meetings, and as a result perhaps, safety has not been a problem. "We have not had any major injuries in the year the program has been in operation," says Sally Clyburn, principal at Mark Twain. "We've had the same things we have at school—stubbed toes and periodic cuts and scratches, normal kid-related injuries."

Nutrition and Food Service:

The program provides daily snacks. Occasionally, the children have cookouts, which include foods such as roasted corn on the cob. The children help develop the menu and prepare the snacks.

Evaluation:

Staff and children continually evaluate the program. Children are co-planners and have daily opportunity for significant feedback. School staff and parents also provide feedback through thank-you letters and conversation with the staff. The Adventure Play Association plans to have a psychologist formally evaluate the program.

Perhaps the best indication of success is what happens to children who have been in the program. According to Heyck, an "extremely aggressive and disruptive" 12-year-old girl from off the streets entered the first adventure playground program at Freed Park a few years ago. "She was encouraged to develop her athletic talent along more constructive lines—that is, running rather than fist fighting. Through our efforts and others, she went on to win a bronze medal at the U.S. Junior Olympics in 1986. She is now in high school and a volunteer in our program."

Similar Programs:

We know of no other Adventure Playground programs in the state. Another recreational program is operated by the Corpus Christi Parks and Recreation Department with 12 after school programs in the Corpus Christi public schools. Girls' Clubs and Boys' Clubs also operate drop-in recreational programs after school.

Keys to Success

The administrators of the model programs described in this handbook all encountered challenges and locked doors on the way to success. They found keys to unlock most of those doors, but they still struggle to fully open others. They offer the following tips to other communities planning school-age child-care programs.

CURRICULUM:

* Define your agency's purpose and philosophy, using NAEYC Academy accreditation guidelines as a base.
* Keep your program interesting but not so action-packed that children get overtired. Explore the real world as much as possible.
* Plan activities that match developmental needs and activities that are not only fun but also learning experiences.
* Allow children to have freedom and responsibility.

* Prepare materials for activities in advance, so children don't have to wait.

* Pretest new activities and screen movies, books, and records.

* Avoid having large-group activities with no alternatives. Children have been regimented all day at school; now they need to have choices.

* Have alternative activities available when plans fall through (the bus breaks down on field trip day, for example).

* Remember that the program serves a wide range of ages. Plan carefully and use smaller age groupings so older children don't get bored or too rough, and younger children don't get frustrated or injured.

* Avoid highly structured activities such as paper activity sheets. They are too much like school.

* Plan field trips carefully. When going to big, crowded places such as zoos and amusement parks, do the following:

  (a) Use parents and support staff or volunteers so that children can be divided into small groups of four or five with each adult. Have children wear name tags.

  (b) Decide check-in points and times.

  (c) Have the children's emergency forms with each small-group leader.

  (d) Give each leader a copy of the director's or central administrator's card with a quarter taped to it.

  (e) Review field trip rules with children and staff.

  (f) Bring plenty of water.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT:

* Plan and budget for an adequate number of staff. Have substitute staff readily available. Volunteers can be recruited as staff members.

* Establish minimum staff qualifications and incentives that will help you recruit quality staff. Incentives need not always be monetary. Good benefits, including free or reduced child care, can be an incentive. Administrative and training support also can be incentives, as can a positive working environment.

* Recruit special staff who have the positive temperament to deal effectively with children.

* Give staff, including volunteers, positive feedback and recognition for hard work.

ADMINISTRATION:

Funding

* Develop the program slowly, starting on a small scale while securing resources for funding and community resources for material and in-kind donations.

* Assure on-going funding to maintain and expand program operation.

* Allocate enough resources for building maintenance and janitorial services.

* In setting fees, plan to offer a certain number of scholarships or sliding scale fees with limits and eligibility criteria. Then be consistent in collecting fees.

* Locate special funding for scholarships and special costs such as additional staff to serve handicapped children.

Community Relationships

* Know the community you are serving and structure the program to meet its needs.

* Seek mutually supportive relationships with parents.

* Keep your funding sources informed. They can be your best community advocate.

* Build a good working relationship in the schools with central administration, individual principals, and—if your program is housed in a school—physical education teachers and custodians.

* Ask principals to evaluate your program.

* Obtain initial support from the school administration. School officials must perceive that:

  (a) The latchkey problem is local and serious.

  (b) Your agency can reduce the number of latchkey children.

  (c) Your agency is professional and competent.

The school and your agency must agree to cooperate; be partners in addressing this issue.

* Maintain constant communication with principals and central administration.

* Ask a senior school official to serve on your board or advisory group.

* Set up a simple communication system with teachers to advise staff when children have homework to complete.

If your program is housed in a school or church:

* Remember your program is a guest in the school or church. Train staff to act accordingly.

* Give positive feedback to school or church staff. Write thank-you notes. Comment on the clean building, the cooperativeness of the people you work with, and the benefits for children and families.

* Run a good program. Your program affects the image of the school or church in the community.

* Install your own telephone in a convenient location. It is worth the extra expense.

* Leave the facility clean.

Licensing/Regulation

* Build a cooperative relationship with government officials from the state licensing agency, the health department, and the fire department. Regulators must perceive that your agency is professional and competent.

* Explain your program operation and philosophy carefully. Your ultimate goals are the same as those of regulators: to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children by providing a high-quality program.

* If you operate a school-based program, summarize licensing standards for school officials so they will know what to expect.

* If the program is in a school or church, work closely with school or church officials to get needed inspections or copies of existing inspections.

* Use your licensing representative as a resource. He or she can sometimes cut through red tape with other officials.

* Get organized. Have information and documentation easily available.

* Know regulations thoroughly and make sure staff know them.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

* Acquire materials and equipment that are age-appropriate for children.

* Plan a separate time outside if you also serve preschool children.

* Limit the number of children on the playground to cut down on accidents and allow closer supervision.

* Provide adequate storage space for equipment.

* Develop a system for inventory control and equipment maintenance as the volume of use increases with enrollment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

* Constantly check equipment, buildings, and grounds for safety hazards, including insects. Remember that equipment may be used by neighborhood children, so it may not be in the same condition it was yesterday.

* Make provisions to handle sick children. If the program is school-based, a picnic cooler can be used to store medications and an inflatable bed can be used in isolating a sick child.

* Plan strategies for handling inclement weather. School gyms are often not air-conditioned. Less vigorous activities, use of shaded outdoor space, and plenty of cold water can make the situation more manageable. When children cannot go outdoors, activities that break children into small groups, active play, and special or new activities can help make the day run more smoothly.

* Teach staff members to play physical activities at a lower level of intensity to avoid injuries to children. Older children should also moderate their play with younger children.

NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICE

* Develop strategies for storing and preparing snacks when the program is housed at a school. A small refrigerator or ice chest can be used. (Freeze water in jugs to keep foods cool and provide drinking water.)

* Plan the menu with nutrition, ease of preparation, variety, cost, and storage in mind.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CORPORATE CHILD DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR TEXAS

The Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas is:

A nonprofit organization that involves business and private industry in supporting services to children and families in Texas.

The Corporate Fund was created in 1979 as a public-private partnership by the Levi Strauss Foundation and the Texas Department of Human Services. It has been identified by the President's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives, the U.S. Congress, and the Governor's Office as a model for other organizations to emulate.

The Corporate Fund provides:

Financial and educational services and resources to parents and adults who work with and for children, including:

* *Texas Child Care Quarterly*, a training publication for the 25,000 state-regulated child-care facilities in Texas, written and edited by the Corporate Fund and published by the Texas Department of Human Services;
* Training for family day home operators, a cooperative project with the Texas A&M Extension Service;
* Scholarships to child caregivers applying for a national professional credential--the Child Development Associate--with funding from the Office of Human Development Services;
* Incentive grants for Texas child-care centers to apply for accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, with funding from the Meadows Foundation;
* Training for communities in developing resource and referral systems and school-age child-care programs, a cooperative project with United Way of Texas, using federal Dependent Care Block Grant funds; and
* Recovering Parents, a pilot project in parenting education for recovering alcoholics and drug addicts, under a grant from the Children's Trust Fund of Texas.

For more information, contact:

Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas
510 South Congress Avenue, Suite 122
Austin, Texas 78704
(512) 478-9741

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD CARE WORKING GROUP UNITED WAY OF TEXAS

The United Way of Texas Child Care Working Group is:

A voluntary committee that was convened by the United Way of Texas and consists of over 100 state and local agencies and organizations that are concerned about the future of child day care in Texas communities.

The Working Group was convened in January 1986, to address the child day care crisis in Texas, in order to stimulate local involvement in expanding and improving child day care resources for Texas families. The group's mission statement is "to promote the economic and social well-being of Texas families, by assuring the availability of child day care options which are developmentally appropriate, accessible, comprehensive, and affordable."

The United Way of Texas Child Care Working Group has addressed:

The affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care programs in Texas.

Accomplishments:

* Development, publication, and statewide distribution of three reports:
  - Latchkey Children in Texas: A Report to the Texas Legislature,
  - The Child Day Care Crisis in Texas: An Introduction to the Problem, and
  - "Child Day Care in Texas: A Fact Sheet."
* Development and promulgation of a series of legislative recommendations to the 70th Texas Legislature leading to passage of legislation which:
  - establishes the Texas Child Care Resource Clearinghouse located at the Texas Employment Commission,
  - allows the use of state buildings for state employee child day care,
  - authorizes the availability of IRS Dependent Care Benefits to state employees, and
  - authorizes cities to provide child day care to low-income children.

For more information, contact:

United Way of Texas
P.O. Box 15164
Austin, Texas 78761
(512) 450-0840